

India-Uganda relations built on shared values, aspirations

India's development partnership will continue to prioritise capacity building, knowledge exchange, infrastructure support and people-centred projects, **Upender Singh Rawat** said in a speech during celebrations to mark the 77th Republic Day.

It is my honour to welcome you to the 77th Republic Day of India. Today, we celebrate not only a constitutional milestone in India's democratic journey but also the enduring friendship between India and Uganda — a partnership built on mutual respect, shared values, and common aspirations.

Seventy-six years ago, the people of India gave themselves a Constitution that affirmed dignity, justice, liberty and equality for all.

Those ideals have guided India's development and engagement with the world, including our relations with Uganda.

Over six decades of diplomatic ties — marked last year by the 60th anniversary of India-Uganda relations — our partnership has grown deeper and more diversified: political understanding, development cooperation, trade and investment, defence collaboration, cultural exchange, and strong people-to-people links.

Development cooperation and capacity building lie at the heart of our relationship.

India remains a reliable partner in human-resource development through programmes that build skills and knowledge across sectors.

Under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme, India has trained thousands of Ugandan officials and professionals in areas such as healthcare, agriculture, banking, cyber technologies, journalism, auditing and public administration.

This year, Uganda has over 150 civilian ITEC slots, and over 250 slots overall have been allocated for short and medium-term civilian and defence training. Bespoke courses have directly benefited Ugandan officials: Resident District Commissioners attended specialised livelihood promotion training; Ministry of Agriculture staff participated in courses at the National Institute of Agricultural Management (MANAGE), Hyderabad; engineers from Uganda Electricity Distribution Company gained technical training; and journalists from Uganda took part in familiarisation programmes in India.

These sustained investments in human capital strengthen institutions and unlock local potential. As we say in Luganda: *"Omuliro tegusibwa mu katiro ke kimu,"* meaning: "You cannot light a fire with a single spark," — a reminder that sustained, collective effort is needed to build capacity.

Defence cooperation is a key pillar of our partnership. Military training exchanges and the Indian Military Advisory Training Team (IMATT), present in Uganda since 2010 and reinforced with a new team from July 2025, underscore our shared commitment to regional stability and security and to building the capabilities of Ugandan defence institutions.

Education links continue to expand. This year, 32 Ugandans received full-



The High Commissioner of India, Mr Upender Singh Rawat (centre), poses for a photograph with Minister for Kampala Capital City and Metropolitan Affairs, Ms Minsa Kabanda (3rd left); State Minister for Foreign Affairs Henry Oryem Okello (4th left); Bank of Uganda Governor Michael Atingi-Ego (3rd right), and other dignitaries during the 77th Republic Day of India celebrations in Kampala on January 28. PHOTO/COURTESY OF HIGH COMMISSION OF INDIA

ly-funded scholarships from the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (IC-CR) to study at premier Indian universities. The National Forensic Sciences University's first overseas campus in Jinja — which commenced its first full academic session in October 2025, offering courses in forensic sciences, cyber security and homeland security — is a tangible example of institutional collaboration that will benefit Ugandan students and professionals for years to come.

We have robust medical cooperation and medical tourism, with support from the Indian Association Uganda and other partners, Indian hospitals facilitate complex surgeries for Ugandan children.

Last year, the High Commission donated physiotherapy equipment to Soroti University.

High-level exchanges have steadily strengthened political trust between our countries. Visits by Indian and Ugandan leaders and ministers in recent years have advanced cooperation across trade, investment, environment and multilateral engagement, and provided momentum for concrete projects on the ground.

Trade and commerce between India and Uganda have seen steady progress, and India is the fourth-largest trade partner for Uganda, with total bilateral trade well in excess of \$1b over the last few years.

The India Trade Show and Exhibitions last year highlighted Indian products and fostered business ties.

The India-Uganda Joint Trade Committee and policy dialogues opened avenues for deeper economic engagement. India's Duty-Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) scheme for most Ugandan exports remains an impor-

tant instrument to boost Uganda's trade potential and diversify its exports.

Indian companies and the diaspora continue to invest in Uganda, creating jobs, building enterprises and contributing to social services — a living testament to South-South cooperation in action.

The Indian diaspora in Uganda has been a vital partner in our shared progress. For over a century, the community has been woven into the social and economic fabric of this country — contributing to commerce, healthcare, education and philanthropy.

It is the result of sustained effort, as we say in Luganda: *"Ebibala by'omusaayi tebibalira munafu,"* meaning, "Fruits of labour do not ripen for the lazy." Your entrepreneurship and commitment to Uganda's development strengthen the bonds between our peoples and are rightly a source of pride for both nations.

At the multilateral level, India and Uganda share a common voice for the Global South. Together, we champion equitable development, the reform of global governance institutions, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Uganda's leadership in regional peace and its constructive role in global fora are deeply valued by India, including its current chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

This year, India will host the 18th BRICS summit as part of its BRICS chairmanship. We will also engage and welcome Uganda as a BRICS partner nation since January 1, 2025.

I would like to congratulate Uganda for the successful and peaceful conduct of its recent general elections. Peaceful democratic processes are essential for stability, growth and the strengthening of institutions.

A brief and important announcement, January 27, 2026. President of the



One voice.

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Upender Singh Rawat, Indian High Commissioner.

European Council António Costa and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen were chief guests at this year's Republic Day celebrations in Delhi.

We note with great interest the conclusion of the India-EU Free Trade Agreement. Described by the European Commission president as the "mother of all" trade deals, its conclusion yesterday marks a significant milestone in India's external economic engagement. Prime Minister Narendra Modi hosted EU President von der Leyen and European Council President Costa to elevate ties and jointly address geopolitical and trade challenges.

This long-awaited FTA is expected to open new vistas for cooperation across trade, defence and security, climate action, critical technologies and a strengthened rules-based global order.

Its qualitative impact on India's overall two-way engagement will create fresh opportunities that India and its partners, including African partners like Uganda, can seize to deepen economic and strategic linkages.

Looking ahead, our relationship holds immense promise. India's development partnership will continue to prioritise capacity building, knowledge exchange, infrastructure support and people-centred projects.

We will work side by side with Uganda to create opportunities for trade, industrialisation, agricultural modernisation, digital innovation and climate-resilient development.

The NFSU campus in Jinja, expanding ITEC engagement, scholarships, business delegations, and continued defence collaboration are the scaffolding on which deeper cooperation will be built.

On this Republic Day, we also recall the spirit of India's cultural and civilisational diversity. The Republic Day Parade in New Delhi — this year themed on the 150 years of Vande Mataram — celebrates our cultural heritage, artistic creativity and unity in diversity. It reminds us that democracy and development are sustained by citizens' active participation, the courage to innovate, and the humility to serve.

I thank our partners today — Bank of Baroda, Bank of India, Airtel, Tata Group, Bajaj Auto and Ashok Leyland — for supporting this event and for their significant operations in Uganda. They are showcasing their products here, and I encourage you to visit their displays.

I also thank our partners for today's programme: the management of Sheraton, members of the Indian community who supported us, and above all, my entire team at the High Commission, who have worked tirelessly.

In closing, let me reiterate India's friendship and gratitude to Uganda — to its government, institutions, business community and people of all communities who welcome and work with us.

Our partnership has matured into a relationship of trust and shared purpose. Together we can advance mutual prosperity, regional stability and a stronger voice for developing nations on the world stage.

Mr Upender Singh Rawat is the High Commissioner of India to Uganda

